

CHAS-225
THE HEIGHTS
Vicinity of Hughesville
Private

Before 1728

The Heights, an ell-shaped frame house with superb interior woodwork, is one of Charles County's least known but very important architectural landmarks. Built in the early eighteenth century, it is remarkable for the almost totally unaltered condition of its interior fabric, consisting of chairrails, ceiling cornices, paneled fireplace walls and paneled wainscoting, despite many years of neglect and subsequent deterioration. Containing three principal first floor rooms, all of which are treated in like manner, it is the only example of its plan and early detailing known to exist in the county.

The Heights was built by William Wilkerson, a wealthy merchant, before 1726. An inventory of Wilkerson's personalty following his death in that year lists the contents of the house by the room in which they were found. Since the listing of rooms corresponds in number and type with those of today, it appears safe to assume it was standing at that time. The property remained in the ownership of six generations of the Wilkerson family until 1811 when the widow of William Wilkerson, VI, sold the house and farm to the trustees of Elizabeth Forbes Bond. However, numerous direct descendants of the builder still live on adjacent properties.

In an 1861 assessment of the property, following its purchase by Samuel Moran, The Heights was described as "an old frame dwelling 38 feet by 20, one story high, with a wing 16 feet by 18 feet, same height and used for a kitchen, all somewhat out of repair." Among its dependencies at the time, all now gone, were "a large double quarter for servants with a large double chimney in the middle, a large corn house and a carriage house," two small log quarters and three tobacco houses.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See Instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Prior's Cleave (preferred)

and/or common Truman's Place; The Heights

2. Location

street & number Wilkerson Road n/a not for publication

city, town Aquasco vicinity of _____ congressional district First

state Maryland code 24 county Charles code 017

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. Warren E. Barley (Sarah H.)

street & number Barley Mortgage Company, P. O. Box 697

city, town Waldorf n/a vicinity of _____ state Maryland 20601

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Charles County Courthouse

street & number P. O. Box B

city, town La Plata state Maryland 20646

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust

Historic Sites Inventory

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1985 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

7. Description

CH-225

Condition		Check one	Check one
excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	<u>X</u> original site
___ good	___ ruins	<u>X</u> altered	___ moved date <u>n/a</u>
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Number of Resources		Number of previous listed
Contributing	Noncontributing	National Register properties
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings	included in this nomination: <u>0</u>
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites	
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures	Original and historic functions
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects	and uses: residential
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total	

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

A one story, ell-shaped, frame house with one interior and one exterior chimney, Prior's Cleave represents three basic phases of development. The oldest part, now the rear wing, was built circa 1710 or earlier as a one room dwelling with an exterior chimney. This structure was significantly enlarged circa 1725 by construction of the existing five-bay main block that had a shed appendage across its rear elevation. Certain features suggest that the addition might have been modified between circa 1725 and circa 1740, but afterwards remained unchanged until about 1835 when a full-length porch was added to the principal facade, the rear shed rebuilt, and a porch added to the wing. The main block features a centered entrance door flanked by four windows with molded sills and sash of nine-over-nine panes, a boldly trimmed eaves cornice, several narrow gable windows, and four wood barred vents in the foundation. The shed has three four-over-four pane windows and an exterior batten door, and the rear wing an exterior door in each side elevation, two windows at the gable end, and a pedimented dormer. A Flemish bond brick chimney stands at one end of the main block and a second chimney projects from the roof of the wing. All of the exterior was resheathed in the 1950s with composition siding and shingles, but a significant amount of early beaded clapboards and wood roof shingles were preserved beneath. The house contains a partial cellar enclosed by brick and fieldstone foundation walls, three principal first floor rooms with a small hall and adjacent room in the shed, and several attic chambers. The three

CH-225

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Prior's Cleave
Charles County Maryland Item number 7 Page 1

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY (continued)

main rooms and three of the attic chambers all retain their early eighteenth century woodwork, each of the first floor rooms having fully paneled end walls framing wide arched fireplaces, paneled wainscoting, ceiling cornices and other trim, paneled doors and wrought hardware. The main stair, enclosed within an area adjacent to the interior chimney, rises in a series of narrow, steep, and sharply angled winders that branch at the top to connect the two attic areas. Structural features include the early joinery and pit sawn pine framework of the circa 1710 wing, an unusual floor framing system involving three sets of closely spaced joists beneath one of the first floor rooms, and a complex composition of rafter trusses and ridge pieces used in the construction of the roof of the circa 1725 addition.

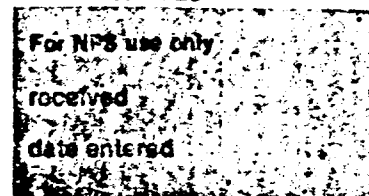
GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

A fairly substantial and certainly sophisticated dwelling by early-eighteenth century standards, Prior's Cleave attained its basic plan and appearance of circa 1740--essentially the same that exists today--as a result of a series of additions and modifications.

Extensive architectural studies carried out over the past several months have revealed that the house began as a one story, one room dwelling with an exterior chimney at one end. There were two exterior doors, one in each side elevation, at least one of which had a small adjacent window. The end opposite the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

CH-225

Continuation sheet Prior's Cleave
Charles County, Maryland

Item number

7

Page

2

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

chimney had no known first floor openings but there was a small window in the gable. The exterior was sheathed with thin, rived and sawn beaded clapboards and, as suggested by the positioning of the roof rafters with their broad side up, the roof covered with horizontal riven boards. Existing evidence indicates that the interior walls were left unfinished. The floor was sealed with thick planks, there was a fireplace opening approximately five feet wide at one end and a narrow open stair or ladder in an opposite corner. The plank floored attic was also unfinished and was likely used for sleeping as well as storage.

The building, measuring 16 by 20-feet, was erected on a two-bay plan, and consistent with known seventeenth and early-eighteenth century construction methods the wall posts and studs aligned with floor joists, ceiling joists and rafters. The wall posts are all morticed, tenoned and pinned to the sills and plates while the down braces at each corner are fastened to the posts and sills by a dovetailed half-lap secured with a wood pin. Intermediate studs are morticed and tenoned top and bottom, although a few are fastened in place by nailed half-laps. The roof frame consists of pairs of rafters, each unit half-lapped at the ridge, butt jointed and nailed to a board false plate at the base, and braced by half-lapped collars. The principal woods used were yellow pine and tulip poplar. Most of the major framing pieces, including rafters, were fashioned from pine and all of the framing was pit sawn.

In about 1720-1740 the house was enlarged by construction of the existing five-bay main block. Measuring 35 by 18-feet and containing two ground floor rooms, a cellar below and several attic chambers above, the addition was built off the chimney end of the

CH-225

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet	Prior's Cleave Charles County, Maryland	Item number	7	Page	3
--------------------	--	-------------	---	------	---

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

earlier dwelling and positioned at a right angle to it to create an ell-shaped plan. The wing also included an enclosed shed extending across the exposed width of the rear elevation, between the chimney end and the side wall of the original structure. The exterior was sheathed with sawn beaded clapboards, somewhat thicker than the Period I siding. Two-piece trim was used to frame the front entrance door and its four flanking windows, as well as an additional first floor window in the end opposite the chimney. It is likely that similar trim was used on the two narrow gable windows flanking the exterior chimney stack, as well as a third window in the opposite gable and two new first floor windows in the Period I wing. The eaves of the front elevation of the addition were enclosed by a boldly fashioned cornice trimmed with double-ogee moldings and have shaped end boards. Mortices in the front sill and a ledge in the foundation wall suggests that a small stoop and/or series of steps fronted the entrance door. Except for one end wall of local ironstone, the foundations were built of brick, those of the front elevation laid in an unusual pattern that alternated three courses of English bond with one of brick laid on edge in a "soldier" course. The roof was initially sheathed on both sides with round end shingles. Similar shingles are also believed to have been used to replace the original clapboard sheathing of the older rear wing. An exterior chimney at one end of the addition was built of oversized brick laid in Flemish bond above a high, English bond base, and had brick tiled weatherings decorated in a pattern of vertical stripes and a corbelled, free-standing stack.

The first floor level of the addition was divided into two rooms, the partition wall being aligned with the outside wall of

CH-225

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

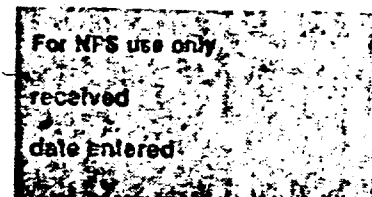
For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet	Prior's Cleave Charles County, Maryland	Item number	7	Page	4
--------------------	--	-------------	---	------	---

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

the Period I dwelling and creating a Hall of 19 by 18-feet and a smaller Parlor 15 by 16-feet. A major alteration that occurred when the wing was built was the demolition and replacement of the former exterior chimney of the original house. The new chimney, almost six feet deep at the base with all but 12-inches built within the Period I room, provided two back-to-back first floor fireplaces. Construction of the new chimney in this location necessitated the removal of all of the framing of the end wall of the original house and the rearrangement of several floor joists. Of the two fireplaces the one in the room of the older wing was taller, the difference in size and the presence of an iron trammel support bar set into the chimney throat suggesting that it was probably used for at least basic cooking functions.

Contemporary with the construction of the new wing was the introduction of the paneled fireplace walls, paneled wainscoting, ceiling cornices and other existing eighteenth century trim. Of the three rooms the Hall was the more formally treated, its fireplace wall executed in a symmetrical arrangement of large rectangular panels, and with a bold five-piece ceiling cornice, a three-piece chairrail and three-piece door and window enframements. A particularly outstanding feature of the woodwork in this room is the manner in which the windows extend below the line of the wainscoting and into the cornice above in such a manner as to be a visually successful, integral part of the total design. This same detail is repeated in the Parlor, but the less complex window surrounds result in a somewhat simpler composition. The Parlor and the third room are only slightly less formal than the Hall. The two-piece trim framing the windows and doors is of

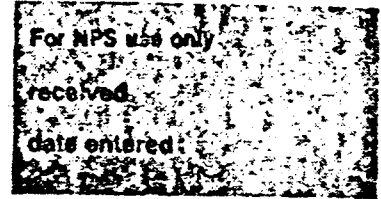
United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination FormContinuation sheet Prior's Cleave
Charles County, Maryland Item number 7 Page 5

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

a plainer profile and the ceiling cornices consist of a beaded board with a large double-ogee crown molding. The design of the two fireplace walls are quite different from that in the Hall, being of an asymmetrical composition of rectangular panels of varying widths, some as narrow as seven inches. Both fireplace walls incorporate paneled doors flanking the arched fireplaces, these as well as the fireplaces framed by a simple applied molding. The relocated and rebuilt interior chimney between the two rooms provided a large closet on one side that was originally partitioned into two back-to-back shelved areas. The space on the opposite side of the chimney contained an enclosed stair that was only accessible from the shed room adjacent to the Hall. The area below the stair carriage, however, was sufficiently high for a passage connecting the two rooms. Very little is known regarding the interior plan and overall appearance of the former eighteenth century shed other than it had a lower roof line than the existing shed and at least one clapboard sheathed interior wall.

The attic level of the Period II wing was partitioned into three rooms, its configuration consisting of a central lobby or hall area and two bedchambers, all with plastered walls and ceilings and low doors in the knee walls providing access to storage areas in the eaves. A fourth bedchamber was created out of the formerly unfinished attic of the Period I structure, its plastered walls and ceiling having been installed at this time. None of the attic chambers had fireplaces and all were very simply finished with two-piece trim, beaded baseboards and four-panel doors, a striking contrast to the elegance of the first floor rooms that emphasized their strictly utilitarian function. Shortly after the new wing was built a narrow dormer window was added to the rear roof slope to provide light and ventilation to the center room, but this was removed in a later renovation.

CH-225

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet	Prior's Cleave Charles County, Maryland	Item number	7	Page	6
--------------------	--	-------------	---	------	---

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

Although the basic building materials (pit sawn pine and poplar) and framing techniques employed in the construction of the addition are basically similar to those of the Period I building, significant differences do exist. The framing of the exterior walls utilize standard carpentry joints used throughout the eighteenth century, with morticed, tenoned and wood pinned posts and down braces, sills and plates, and morticed intermediate studding. In contrast to the frame of the Period I dwelling where all structural members are in perfect alignment, the framing of the addition, particularly in the spacing of the studs and posts, has no correlation with the roof frame or joists and tie beams. The two areas of greatest interest, however, are found in the cellar and in the attic. In the former there is a striking difference between the floor framing of the Hall and Parlor. The Parlor floor is framed using two summer beams that span the tie beam supporting the first floor partition and the end sill and which in turn support three sets of joists spaced an average of 13-inches on center. The much more standard floor frame of the Hall involves one central summer beam that carries spanning joists spaced an average of 28-inches on center. Also of interest are corresponding empty but previously used mortices in both end sills, and a third empty mortice in the front sill that is in alignment with a section of replacement work in the rear sill directly below the door opening from the Hall to the shed. None of these mortices appear to relate to the existing structural configuration, suggesting either an extensive early reworking of the frame or the possibility that some of the sills were reused from another building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

CH-225

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet	Prior's Cleave Charles County, Maryland	Item number	7	Page	7
--------------------	--	-------------	---	------	---

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

The roof framing is perhaps the most intriguing structural feature of the Period II addition. For a distance of almost 17-feet in from the chimney end the roof is framed by evenly spaced rafter units, all morticed, tenoned and pinned at the ridge and to the corresponding joist ends, the latter negating the need for the standard false or secondary plate. The collars connecting the two rafters of each unit are similarly joined. The remainder of the roof frame employs a ridge piece, a 5 by 6-inch member set on the diagonal at the apex of the rafters and supported at each end by pairs of morticed and tenoned rafter units over which it is half-lapped. The intermediate rafters are morticed into the ridge piece separately and not as units, the spacing of the rafters being slightly different on the front slope than on the other. The collars of the central rafters are half-lapped and nailed, allowing greater structural flexibility in angling them to join one rafter to another. The intermediate rafters, as well as the two supporting rafter units at the gable end of the roof, are morticed, tenoned and pinned to the joist ends on the front side of the roof, but on the opposite side are fastened by nailed butt joints to angled uprights forming the valley of the connecting roof between the two parts of the house. The connecting roof also utilizes a ridge piece, but in this area the rafters are in alignment, morticed into the ridge piece and braced by morticed and tenoned collars. The curious differences in the roof frame of the addition are thought to be the result of a carpentry decision on how to successfully join the two parts of the house. The choice of this rather complex solution is somewhat surprising since other easier methods certainly existed. Another theory currently being explored is that the Period II addition actually represents two phases of construction. This is based on the fact that the portion of the roof employing a ridge piece corresponds in location with the unusual floor framing of the Parlor. This and the fact that

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

CH-225
For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Prior's Cleave
Charles County, Maryland Item number 7 Page 8

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

the foundation wall at this end of the house is of stone, which extends a short distance across the front elevation but then abruptly changes to brick, as well as other more subtle differences, combine to suggest that a major rebuilding of an even earlier addition to its present form might have occurred. However, insufficient evidence has been revealed to date to either prove or disprove this possibility.

Little if any change in the appearance of the house occurred between circa 1740 and circa 1835, years in which the property history suggests it stood empty or tenanted. It was in 1835 that the farm was purchased by Samuel C. Moran, a local farmer of relatively modest means who made various repairs and alterations to the house. Fortunately, very little of any significance was done to the interior or structural frame, thus sparing the house the fate experienced by many early buildings that were extensively renovated in the nineteenth century to conform them to dramatically different tastes in architecture and decoration. At Prior's Cleave the interior renovations were largely confined to the installation of mantles in the Hall and Parlor, the rebuilding of the stair to its present configuration, the replacement of the trim and the installation of a dormer window in the Period I attic chamber, and the replacement of all of the window sash. It was also about this time that several floor joists and portions of the downstairs flooring in the Period I wing were replaced, the fireplace hearth in the same room extended to its present length and the Period I corner stair-ladder removed. On the exterior the roof was resingled with square end shingles, a full-length, shed-roofed porch was added to the front elevation, and the Period II shed rebuilt. The new shed, higher and somewhat deeper than its predecessor, was partitioned into two rooms: a small entry hall with a batten exterior door, and an adjacent bedroom or office,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

CH-225

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet	Prior's Cleave Charles County, Maryland	Item number	7	Page	9
--------------------	--	-------------	---	------	---

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

the latter heated by a fireplace housed in an exterior chimney. Both rooms of the shed were finished with lath and plaster on the walls and ceilings, simple two-piece window and door surrounds, and beaded baseboards. The shed is believed to have been built on wood posts, later replaced by the existing fieldstone and brick foundations. It was also during this period that a shed-roofed porch was added to the rear wing, the wood piers or blocks supporting the same wing removed and replaced with brick, and an enclosed cellar entry built between the two exterior chimneys. Despite these "improvements" the building was described in an 1861 appraisers report as "somewhat out of repair." It was noted in the same report that the rear (Period I) wing was "used as a kitchen." (See attached Property History.)

Between 1861 and 1919 Prior's Cleave passed through several ownerships and was occupied by tenants until its sale to the DeMarr family. Only minor repairs were made to the house between circa 1850 and 1930, the most readily apparent the replacement of some of the exterior sheathing and the removal of the exterior chimney of the shed. Between 1930 and the 1950's the exterior walls and roofs were covered with composition siding and shingles, the floor frames of the two porches replaced, and basic electrical service installed in the first floor rooms.

In late-1984 the house was abandoned, having been replaced by a modern structure built less than twelve feet from its front wall, its proximity resulting in the demolition of the front porch and the remaining exterior chimney.

8. Significance

CH-225

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1710, 1725, 1835 Builder/Architect William Wilkinson I

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: C
Applicable Exceptions: none
Significance Evaluated: local

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

Prior's Cleave, a rare surviving example of early Tidewater domestic architecture, is a building of outstanding significance. Unquestionably one of Maryland's architectural landmarks, its overall plan, excellent detailing and remarkably unaltered condition establish it as unique among the fewer than ten buildings on Maryland's Western Shore recent studies have documented to date before 1730. Of particular significance is a wealth of early joinery and other structural details, including the two-bay sawn frame of the circa 1710 wing and the complex roof and floor frame of the circa 1725 main block. Many of these carpentry features are among the first recorded examples of their type. Another especially important detail is the exceptionally fine paneling and trim in each of the three principal rooms, constituting the most extensive woodwork of its kind known to exist in a single house of this type and age in Maryland. One of the most sophisticated and by far the most complete and best preserved of those few buildings in this region with similar early origins, Prior's Cleave is an extraordinarily valuable source for information regarding the development of vernacular architectural traditions in the Chesapeake region, and continues to contribute immeasurably to new scholarly interpretations of the architecture and material culture of Maryland's early colonial period.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

CH-225

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
Date entered

Continuation sheet Prior's Cleave
Charles County, Maryland Item number 8 Page 10

HISTORY AND SUPPORT:

Recent studies have proven without question that Prior's Cleave is an extremely important building, especially so in the context of current reevaluations of earlier conclusions regarding the vernacular architecture of Maryland and Virginia that for the most part were based on superficial evidence and traditional history. The comprehensive documentation and study of a building of this significance, particularly under the special circumstances that presently exist, is an opportunity not likely to be repeated since there are so few extant buildings of comparable age and architectural excellence. Prior's Cleave has already yielded considerable new information illustrating a number of important aspects relating to transitional changes in early building practices and methods of construction that had otherwise only been theorized or where historical rather than physical evidence existed. It is significant to note that the four buildings on Maryland's Western Shore recently documented to date between 1699 and 1720--Holly Hill and Cedar Park in Anne Arundel County, Sarum in Charles County, and Ocean Hall in St. Mary's County--were all extensively altered, renovated and/or "restored" at various times in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Prior's Cleave, a recent discovery that luckily escaped the same fate, has allowed professional historians and preservationists a unique opportunity to record an early-eighteenth century building in a truly remarkable state of preservation, using as a basis more recent scholarly interpretations of regional history and architecture. Studies of the building completed to date have produced dozens of pages of scaled architectural drawings complimented by extensive photographic documentation, field notes and other written material.*

* Much of this information will be presented in a book on the vernacular architectural traditions of the lower southern Maryland region being prepared under a grant from the Maryland Historical Trust.

CH-225

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet	Prior's Cleave Charles County, Maryland	Item number	8	Page	11
--------------------	--	-------------	---	------	----

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

Prior's Cleave was built by William Wilkinson, a affluent Patuxent River merchant, on land previously owned by Richard Charlett. Charlett, who had received the patent for 400 acres he named "Pryors Cleive" in 1679, was himself a reasonably prosperous merchant by late-seventeenth century standards, maintaining a storehouse and dwelling on Prior's Cleave.¹ His sudden death in 1693 caused great concern among his friends and neighbors who, after having "carried the corpse to his plantation in order to a decent burial," immediately sent a representative to the provincial capital to advise officials of Charlett's death, further stating that "he was possessed with a very fair estate and as we hear or find hath no relations or kindred in the country but do understand that in England he hath divers very near kindred and relations. Whether he hath any will or no we are altogether ignorant. We have ordered his house to be locked up and as well as we can secured his pocket book, papers, keys and money which were in his pocket. We thought good to acquaint your Honors with what hath been done and do think it very needful that care be taken and speedily for securing the house and store where (there) are divers goods and merchandise (that) may be broken up and ransacked if care not be taken."²

According to related documents Charlett was survived by two sisters and had left a will that was probated in London. For several years there was an exchange of communication between Maryland and London regarding Charlett's estate, the heirs represented by no less than the Lord Mayor of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Archbishop, outspoken and critical of the manner in which he believed Charlett's estate in the province was being managed, at one point so angered the Provincial Court that they sent a letter reprimanding him for "exceeding his authority" and "stepping out of the bounds of his jurisdiction."³

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

CH-225

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Prior's Cleave Charles County, Maryland Item number 8 Page 12

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

Although Charlett's estate was not settled until 1743, William Wilkinson had assumed possession of Prior's Cleave as early as 1711 for a boundary dispute recorded that year between Wilkinson and Samuel Hanson, owner of an adjoining tract called Tryall, specifically identifies Wilkinson as the "owner of Prior's Cleave."⁴ It was also in 1711 that William Wilkinson contracted Cornelius Wildman to build at Prior's Cleave a house 25-feet in length with two attached shed rooms, and to renovate an existing building identified as the "Countinghouse." The contract called for the new house to have four large sash windows, a large double eaves cornice, paneled wainscoting, ceiling cornices, a chimney piece incorporating a "large landscape panel," plastered walls and ceilings above the wainscoting, and an enclosed stair and closet. Other similar woodwork and a stair was to be installed in the countinghouse, and repairs made to several quarters, a stable and existing fencing. Wildman commenced work a year later, in May of 1712, and continued there until late summer when he was dismissed by Wilkinson because twenty-one thousand bricks he made for a new chimney and other masonry work were "so negligently made and burned that the same bricks were wholly useless and unserviceable." Wilkinson subsequently brought suit against Wildman, claiming damages of £400 sterling. In a 1716 jury decision Wildman was declared innocent and the plaintiff assessed £22 in damages. The Justices of the Provincial Court, however, reversed this, decreeing that Wildman "take nothing but be in mercy for his false claims" and reimburse Wilkinson for all costs and charges.⁵

How much, if any, of the work described in Wildman's contract was actually completed is not known. If the bricks he made were as inferior as Wilkinson claimed they were probably not used, and if not it is conceivable that the new house was not built,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

CH-225

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet	Prior's Cleave Charles County, Maryland	Item number	8	Page	13
--------------------	--	-------------	---	------	----

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

or at least not completed until after 1716. Nevertheless, what is clear is that several buildings were standing on the property in 1711, including a "wooden house" and several dependencies. How many of these were standing during Richard Charlett's tenure is uncertain. It is quite possible that all of them existed at the time of Charlett's death in 1693 inasmuch as several are referred to as "old" and in need of extensive repair. Since the framing features integral to the Period I portion of the existing house are contemporary in type and manner of execution with known building techniques of that time it is quite possible that the rear wing of Prior's Cleave dates to this period. If so it is the third house on Maryland's Western Shore for which a pre-1715 construction date has been definitely established. If it can be determined that it was in fact standing at or prior to Charlett's death it becomes the most elite of buildings; Maryland's oldest standing structure west of the Chesapeake Bay and one of the fewer than six seventeenth century buildings many historians believe might be all that remain in the entire Tidewater region of Maryland and Virginia.⁶

If Wilkinson did not build his new house as contracted for by 1716, he had certainly done so by his death in 1726. The inventory of his estate filed that year contains an impressive listing of personalty. Itemized room by room, the contents are listed as they were found in the "Hall," "Hall Chamber," "Parlor," "Parlor Chamber," as well as in several "closets," the "counting-house," and in the "cellar."⁷ The manner in which the inventory was presented suggests that the countinghouse was attached to the dwelling since it was followed by the cellar. It is interesting to note that the contents of the countinghouse included a "library" of numerous volumns as well as assorted fireplace and cooking equipment. Since there is no specific reference to a separate

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

CH-225

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet	Prior's Cleave Charles County, Maryland	Item number	8	Page	14
--------------------	--	-------------	---	------	----

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

kitchen area or structure, although other dependencies and their contents are named, the suggestion is that the countinghouse served a dual function. Interestingly, this corresponds with the fact that the Period I rear wing of the existing house, while having the same fully paneled fireplace wall, wainscoting and trim of the Parlor, had a larger fireplace that shows obvious evidence of having been used for kitchen functions as early as its initial construction. The contents of Wilkinson's house as listed in the inventory could have quite easily fit into a house the size of the existing building. Additionally, the rooms named, assuming that the countinghouse was an attached structure, correspond with the spacial configuration known to exist following construction of the Period II wing. The historical evidence, combined with early construction features, strongly suggest that the eighteenth century portion of the existing house was built by Wilkinson before 1726.

Wilkinson, in addition to the Prior's Cleave plantation and storehouses, owned a considerable amount of land at the time of his death, some of it contiguous to Prior's Cleave and other acreage located in both Charles and Prince George's counties, as well as a nearby grist mill. The heirs named in his will were a daughter, Sophia, and the children of a deceased son, William. Sophia received slaves, livestock, a number of household furnishings and silver, as well as realty and a half-interest in the mill. The other half-interest in the mill and storehouses he bequeathed to his grandson, William Wilkinson III, residual heir and next owner of Prior's Cleave.⁸

CH-225

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet	Prior's Cleave Charles County, Maryland	Item number	8	Page	15
--------------------	--	-------------	---	------	----

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

There is scant information available concerning this particular William Wilkinson. It appears from various land records and other documents that while augmenting the estate left him by his grandfather by the purchase of additional lands and the continued operation of the mill, he did not maintain the storehouses and, more significantly, did not actually live on the Prior's Cleave property. This last fact lends further credence to the belief that the existing house was built by William Wilkinson Sr.

In 1743 the estate of Richard Charlett was finally settled and Prior's Cleave and an adjacent 500 acre tract called "Truman's Place" were formally deeded over to William Wilkinson III by Joshua Savage "of the Custom House, London, Gent."⁹ The comparatively modest sale price of £400 sterling for 900 acres with improvements in what was then as now one of the most fertile areas of Charles County suggests that an earlier purchase or lease arrangement with William Wilkinson Sr. existed, although no recorded document of such has been found. William Wilkinson III died in Prince Georges County in 1755. To his four daughters he bequeathed the 500 acres of Truman's Place. To his widow, Barbara, Wilkinson left his Prince Georges County dwelling plantation, and to his son, William, then a minor, his remaining real estate holdings in Charles and Prince George's counties.¹⁰

The 1783 Tax Assessments name William Wilkinson as owner of Prior's Cleave, Truman's Place and The Inclosure,¹¹ the last a 500 acre parcel purchased by William Wilkinson Sr. in 1720.¹² Four years later Wilkinson had Prior's Cleave resurveyed and, following the boundaries given in the grant of 1679, the property was discovered to contain 992 acres rather than the 400 originally awarded to Charlett.¹³ In a 1790 Deed of Trust Wilkinson assigned

CH-225

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only	
received	
date entered	

Continuation sheet Prior's Cleave
Charles County, Maryland Item number 8 Page 16

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

Prior's Cleave and Truman's Place to Matthew Blair.¹⁴ The following year a deed of sale for the same property was recorded giving Blair an unencumbered title to the property.¹⁵ William Wilkinson IV and Matthew Blair both died in December, 1798, the former survived by a widow and several minor children.¹⁶ In 1802, for unspecified considerations, the heirs of Matthew Blair deeded back to Ann H. Wilkinson, widow, all of the lands conveyed in 1791.¹⁷

In 1811 Ann Wilkinson sold 538 acres, combining portions of Prior's Cleave and Truman's Place, to Thomas Marshall and John Forbes, Trustees of Elizabeth Forbes Bond.¹⁸ In 1831 the same property was sold by Robert Beale and others, surviving Trustees, to Ignatius Gardiner.¹⁹ In 1835 508 acres of these lands, by then referred to as Truman's Place but including the house and part of what was originally Prior's Cleave, was conveyed by Gardiner to Samuel C. Moran.²⁰

It was shortly after Moran's purchase that various repairs and alterations were made to the house. This included the addition of porches and the rebuilding of the rear shed, the installation of new window sash, and replacement of the wood roof shingles. Changes made to the rear wing at about the same time involved the addition of a dormer window, new trim in the attic chamber, new foundations, lengthening the fireplace hearth and replacing portions of the adjacent flooring, and altering the height of the two first floor windows. In the Hall and Parlor new mantles were installed and the corresponding fireplace openings reduced to half their original size. It was also at this time that the Period I stair was rebuilt, although its curious configuration of steep narrow winders is probably not unlike the plan of the earlier stair. Although seemingly extensive, all of these repairs

CH-225

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Prior's Cleave

Continuation sheet Charles County, Maryland

Item number

8

Page 17

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

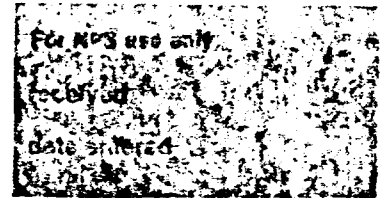
and alterations, except perhaps for the rebuilding of the stair and rear shed, were relatively minor considering the amount of original framing, plaster and interior woodwork that was left untouched.

Samuel C. Moran, a farmer of modest means, died intestate in 1859, leaving a widow and several minor children. In 1861 the property was appraised to establish the proportionate interests of the heirs. The recorded assessment of Truman's Place, by then reduced to 421 acres, describes the house as "an old frame dwelling about 38 feet by 20, one story high, with a wing 16 feet by 18 same height and used for a kitchen, all somewhat out of repair." Ancillary structures included in the report were "a large double quarter for servants with a large double chimney in the middle, a large cornhouse and a carriage house all in tolerable repair, 2 small log quarters for servants, 2 tobacco houses 40 by 24 with 2 sheds 12 by 40 feet to each and one tobacco house 32 by 24 with one shed 12 by 32 all in good repair." Of these buildings only the house and one tobacco barn survive.

Moran's widow continued to reside on the property until her death in 1870.²² In 1877 her heirs sold their interests in the house and 421 acres to John Bowling, Trustee for Helen Mercer.²³ In 1919 the same land was purchased by brothers Thomas and Norman DeMarr, the former selling his half interest to the other in 1922.²⁴ The DeMarr family made only basic repairs to the house between 1930 and 1955, the most obvious being the resheathing of the exterior walls and roof with composition siding and shingles (fortunately preserving beneath portions of beaded clapboards and roof shingles dating to the eighteenth century). Indoor plumbing and other modern conveniences were ignored, although

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

CH-225



Continuation sheet Prior's Cleave
Charles County, Maryland Item number 8 Page 18

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

electrical service was provided to several first floor rooms. No further efforts were made to maintain the house and in early 1984 construction began on a new house sited not more than twelve feet from its front wall. The proximity of the new house necessitated the demolition of the circa 1835 front porch and resulted in the collapse of the eighteenth century exterior chimney. In the fall of 1984 the house was abandoned and would have been destroyed had it not been for the efforts of several individuals who, recognizing the great significance of the building and agreeing to remove it from the site, were able to arrange its purchase.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Historic sites inventories conducted throughout Maryland in the past two decades have not only served to catalogue surviving examples of our domestic architecture, but have also dramatically illustrated the alarming rate at which our most historically valuable buildings are vanishing. Nowhere is this more evident than in southern Maryland, one of the most historic areas of the Chesapeake region. In Charles County alone recent fires destroyed two of Maryland's most important historic and architectural landmarks, Habre de Venture, the unique crescent shaped home of a Signer of the Declaration of Independence, and Marshall Hall, one of Maryland's earliest brick buildings.* Many other similarly important buildings have disappeared in recent years, the loss of each increasing the significance of those that have survived. It has become an unfortunate truth that buildings on Maryland's Western

* Ironically, at the time of the fire Marshall Hall was owned by the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior. Habre de Venture is also owned by the Park Service, but its purchase was arranged after the fire.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

CH-225

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Prior's Cleave
Continuation sheet Charles County, Maryland Item number 8 Page 19

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

Shore retaining their historic architectural integrity are extremely scarce, and buildings as early and as architecturally distinctive as Prior's Cleave almost nonexistent.

Prior's Cleave is currently the subject of an intensive study and all of the physical features of the house are being carefully and thoroughly documented.* The house is to be relocated to an appropriate setting near historic Port Tobacco (NR) in Charles County and will be maintained as a private residence with public access to be provided on a limited basis. The restoration and continued preservation of this unique, irreplaceable landmark will be an invaluable contribution to the recognition of Maryland's rich cultural history by scholars and public alike.

*Among those assisting in the interpretations of recorded features are two widely recognized experts in the field of early Tidewater architecture, Dr. Cary Carson, Director of Research for Colonial Williamsburg, and Garry Wheeler Stone, Archeologist, St. Mary's City Commission, St. Mary's City, Maryland.

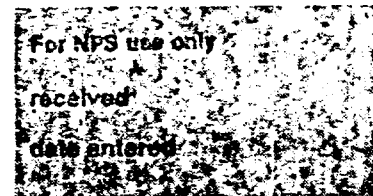
NOTES:

1. Patents, Liber 20, folio 249. Annapolis.
2. Testamentary Proceedings, Liber 156, f. 11-17. Annapolis.
3. ibid, f. 188.
4. Deeds, Liber M#2, f. 71. La Plata.
5. Provincial Court Judgements, Liber VD#2, f. 173; VD#3/15, 16, 173. Annapolis.
6. Cary Carson, et al, "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies," Winterthur Portfolio, Vol. 16, No. 2/3, (Summer, 1981): 135-196. See also: Herman J. Heikkinen and Mark Edwards, "The Key-Year Dendrochronology Technique and its Application in Dating Historic Structures in Maryland," The Association for Preservation Technology, Vol. XV, No. 3 (1983): 2-25.

CH-225

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Prior's Cleave Item number 8 Page 20
Charles County, Maryland

Notes (continued)

7. Inventories, Liber 2, f. 206; 11/815,820. Annapolis.
8. Wills, Liber 19, f. 16. Annapolis.
9. Deeds, Liber K#2, f. 1. La Plata.
10. Wills, (Prince George's County), Liber 29, f. 368. Annapolis.
11. 1783 Tax Assessments, District 4, Charles County. Annapolis.
12. Deeds, Liber H#2, f. 372. La Plata.
13. Unpatented Tracts, folder 394. Annapolis.
14. Deeds, Liber K#4, f. 37. La Plata.
15. ibid, f. 244.
16. Chancery Records, Liber 26, f. 250. Annapolis.
17. Deeds, Liber IB#5, f. 286. La Plata.
18. Deeds, Liber IB#9, f. 324. La Plata.
19. Deeds, Liber IB#19, f. 510. La Plata.
20. Deeds, Liber IB#22, f. 91. La Plata.
21. Equity Proceedings, Packet #205. La Plata.
22. Wills, Liber JS#17, f. 458. La Plata.
23. Deeds, Liber BGS#2, f. 92. La Plata.
24. Deeds, Liber WMA#34, f. 625; WMA#39/472. La Plata.

9. Major Bibliographical References

CH-225

Land and Probate Records, Charles County Courthouse, LaPlata, MD
Patents, Probate and Provincial Court Records and Tax Assessments,
Hall of Records, Annapolis, MD

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acreQuadrangle name Hughesville, MarylandQuadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting NorthingB

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting NorthingC

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification: The property consists of a 100' square centered on the resource. As the house is to be moved in the near future and the original setting has been destroyed by the construction of a new house about 10' to the front, this acreage provides a minimum in acreage to protect the site until the move is made.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	n/a	code	county	code
-------	-----	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title J. Richard Rivoireorganization Preservation Consultant date January 1985street & number Post Office Box 132 telephone (301) 932-1000city or town La Plata state Maryland 20646

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national state X local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

PRIOR'S CLEAVE,
Charles County, Maryland.
National Register Nomination.

CH-225

ATTACHMENT #1:

The following are reductions of eight of the preliminary working drawings that were based on information recorded as of December 1, 1984. These and fifteen pages of additional drawings are currently being revised to include features recorded since that time.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

CHAS-225

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY MAIL # 0902255104

1 NAME

HISTORIC

THE HEIGHTS

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

South terminus of Wilkerson Road

CITY, TOWN

Gallant Green

☒ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1st

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Charles

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

☐ STRUCTURE

☐ SITE

☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS

☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

☐ UNOCCUPIED

☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED

☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED

☒ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE

☐ COMMERCIAL

☐ EDUCATIONAL

☐ ENTERTAINMENT

☐ GOVERNMENT

☐ INDUSTRIAL

☐ MILITARY

☐ MUSEUM

☐ PARK

☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

☐ RELIGIOUS

☐ SCIENTIFIC

☐ TRANSPORTATION

☐ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Ella Mae DeMarr

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

The Heights, Wilkerson Road

CITY, TOWN

Hughesville

☐ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Charles County Courthouse

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

Charles Street (P. O. Box B)

CITY, TOWN

La Plata

STATE

Maryland 20646

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CH-225

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR
☒ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED
☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Heights, with an elevated situation overlooking the Patuxent River valley to the east, is one of Maryland's most important examples of early eighteenth century architecture. In run down and deteriorating condition, the exterior of the house belies its unusual plan and distinctive interior.

A one-story, frame, ell-shaped structure, the east front elevation is five bays in width, having a transomed door occupying the center bay and flanked by four windows of nine-over-nine sash. The front slope of the dormerless gable roof continues down to provide a full length porch characteristic of Tidewater architecture. Beneath the roof of the porch can be seen the original eave cornice with its ogee crown and bedmoldings and its early paint. The presence of the boxed and decorated cornice indicates that the porch, although appearing to be early, is later than the house. At the south end of the main block stands a single exterior chimney of brick construction over a stone footing and with deep, tiled weatherings and free-standing stack. To the left of the chimney is an enclosed entrance to a cellar. The cellar, confined to the area beneath the main section of the house, has walls of common ironstone, dirt floor, and a large fireplace at its east end.

The rear west wing is three bays wide on both side elevations and has a large brick chimney located at the point where the two parts of the house join. A shed addition on the west side of the main block is early, probably eighteenth century, but a similar shed room and porch on the south side of the west wing is considerably later. On the north slope of the roof of the west wing is a single pedimented dormer. Both sections of the house are sheathed with composition shingles. All of the exterior walls, sheathing and framing, are in poor condition.

The interior of The Heights, although deteriorating through neglect and abuse, is handsomely finished with paneled fireplace walls, paneled wainscoting and molded ceiling cornices. The first floor room configuration consists of three large principal rooms, two in the main section and one in the west wing, a small pantry off the west room, and a small room and stair hall off the south room. All three main rooms have fireplaces, those of the north and west rooms being back to back and sharing a common chimney. All of the paneling and trim appears original and consists of rectangular and square raised panels separated by molded stiles. The first floor doors and window sash and two mantels, however, are later. The "Y" shaped stair, although possibly eighteenth century, does not appear to be original. It rises in two steep flights to the attic, dividing as it branches off to the two attic areas. The attic contains two chambers over the main section and a single room and small hall over the west wing.

(continued on the attached sheet)

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES C. 1720

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

William Wilkerson

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Heights, an ell-shaped frame house with superb interior woodwork, is one of Charles County's least known but very important architectural landmarks. Built in the early eighteenth century, it is remarkable for the almost totally unaltered condition of its interior fabric, consisting of chairrails, ceiling cornices, paneled fireplace walls and paneled wainscoting, despite many years of neglect and subsequent deterioration. Containing three principal first floor rooms, all of which are treated in like manner, it is the only example of its plan and early detailing known to exist in the county.

The Heights was built by William Wilkerson, a wealthy merchant, before 1726. An inventory of Wilkerson's personalty following his death in that year lists the contents of the house by the room in which they were found. Since the listing of rooms corresponds in number and type with those of today, it appears safe to assume it was standing at that time. The property remained in the ownership of six generations of the Wilkerson family until 1811 when the widow of William Wilkerson, VI, sold the house and farm to the trustees of Elizabeth Forbes Bond. However, numerous direct descendents of the builder still live on adjacent properties.

In an 1861 assessment of the property, following its purchase by Samuel Moran, The Heights was described as "an old frame dwelling 38 feet by 20, one story high, with a wing 16 feet by 18 feet, same height and used for a kitchen, all somewhat out of repair." Among its dependencies at the time, all now gone, were "a large double quarter for servants with a large double chimney in the middle, a large corn house and a carriage house," two small log quarters and three tobacco houses.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Heights is located on a 243.44 acre tract of land of land identified as Parcel 13, Maps 26 and 27, Charles County Tax Maps (revised January, 1976.)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

J. Richard Rivoire

ORGANIZATION

Charles County Planning Department

DATE

October 1978

STREET & NUMBER

Charles County Courthouse

TELEPHONE

645-6537

CITY OR TOWN

La Plata

STATE

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

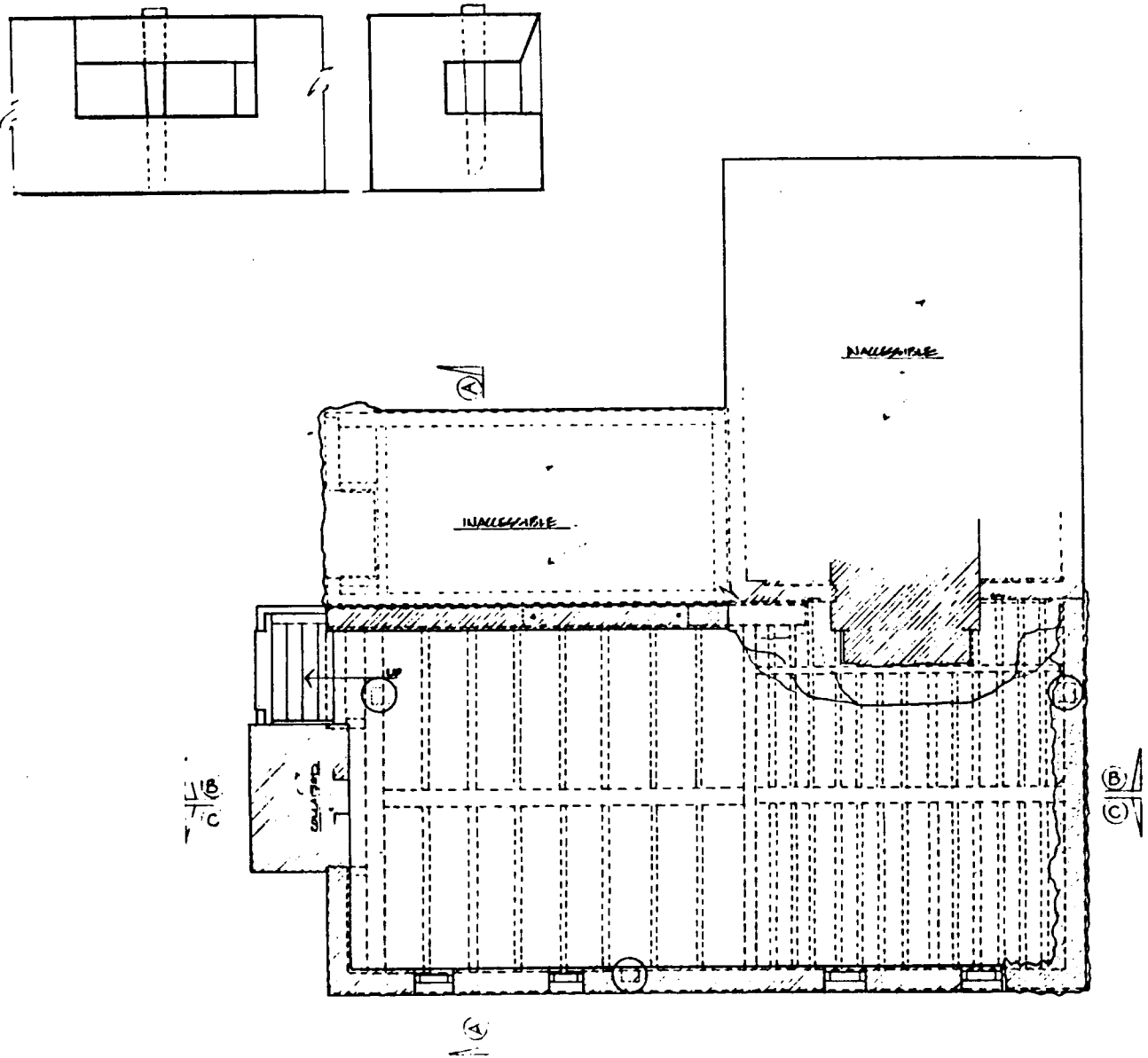
CH-225

Continuation of #7 (Description)--THE HEIGHTS
Page 2

Most of the woodwork of the attic, including chairrails, baseboards, flooring, doors and window trim appear to be original.

PRIOR'S AVE,
Charles County, Maryland.

CH-225

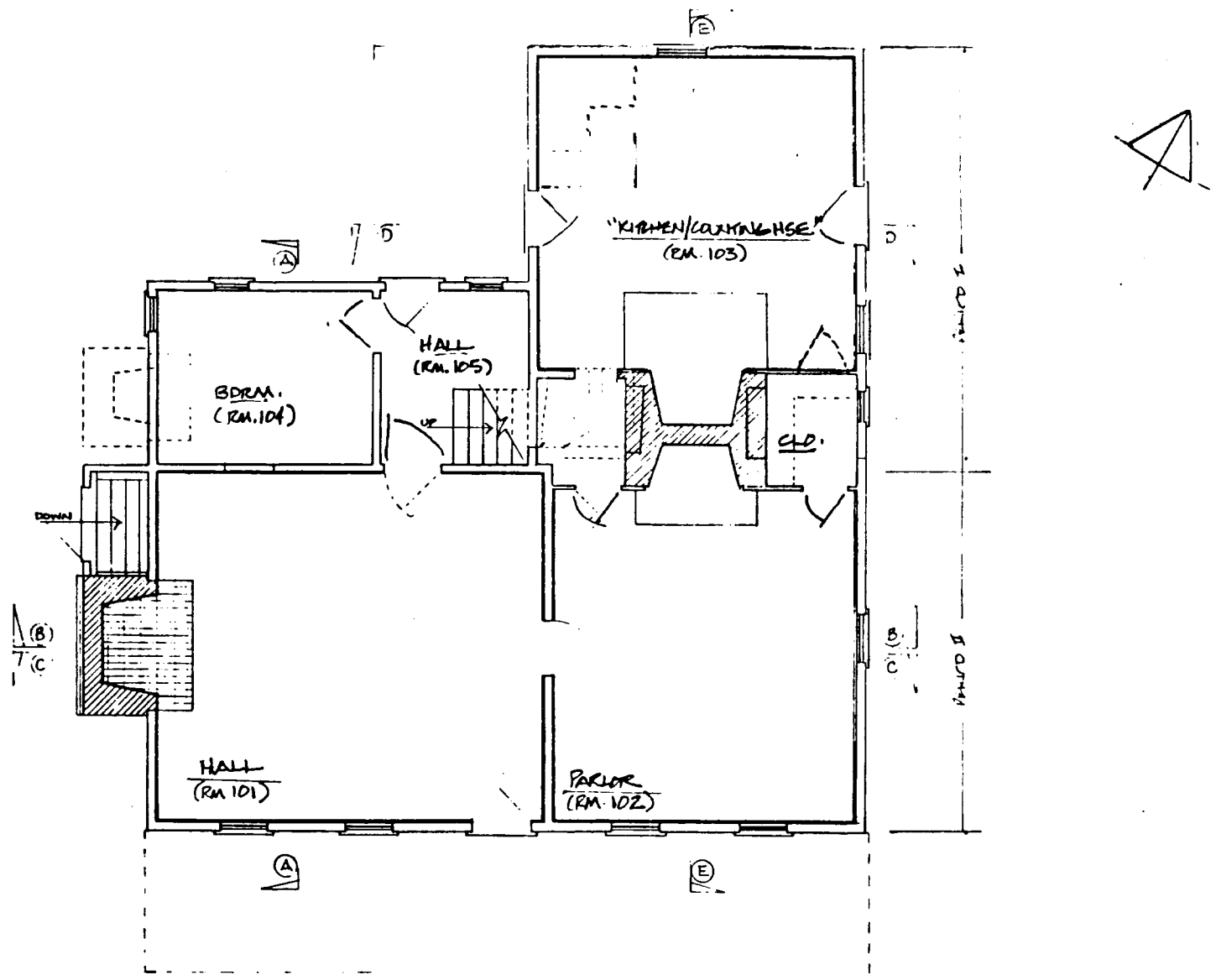


CELLAR PLAN
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'0"

Fig. 1. CELLAR PLAN. Original scale:
1/4-in. to 1-ft.

PRIOR'S CLEAVE
 CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND.

CH-225



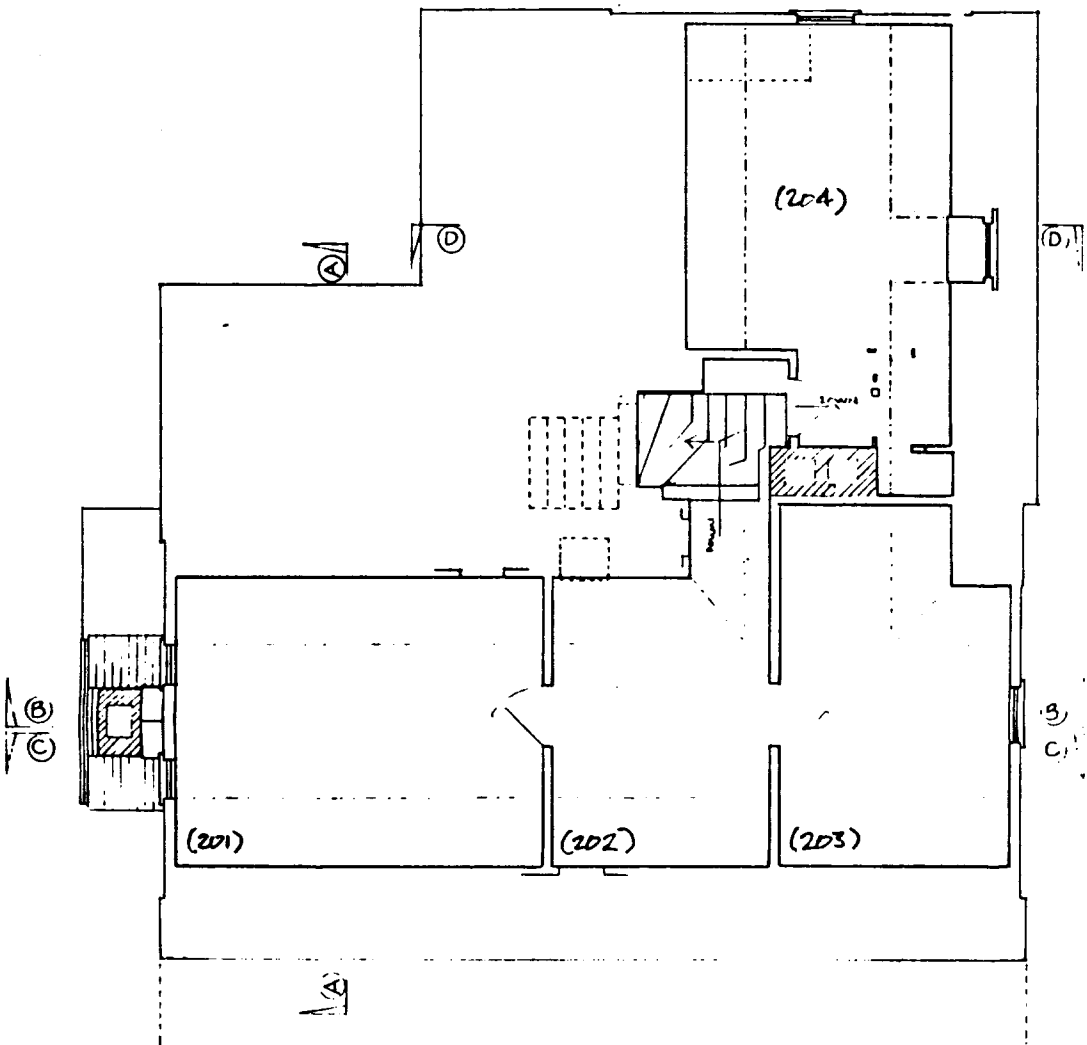
FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

Fig. 2. FIRST FLOOR PLAN. Original
 scale: 1/4-in. to 1-ft.

SURVIVOR POT	WILKINSON ROAD	PRIOR'S CLEAVE	ARUNDEL COUNTY	CHARLES COUNTY	MARYLAND	CHAS	SHEET OF	TYPE I
-----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	----------	------	----------	-----------

PRIOR'S AVE,
Charles County, Maryland.

CH-225



ATTIC PLAN
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

FIG. 3. ATTIC PLAN. Original scale:
1/4-in. to 1-ft.

PRIOR'S CLEVE
Charles County, Maryland.

CH-225

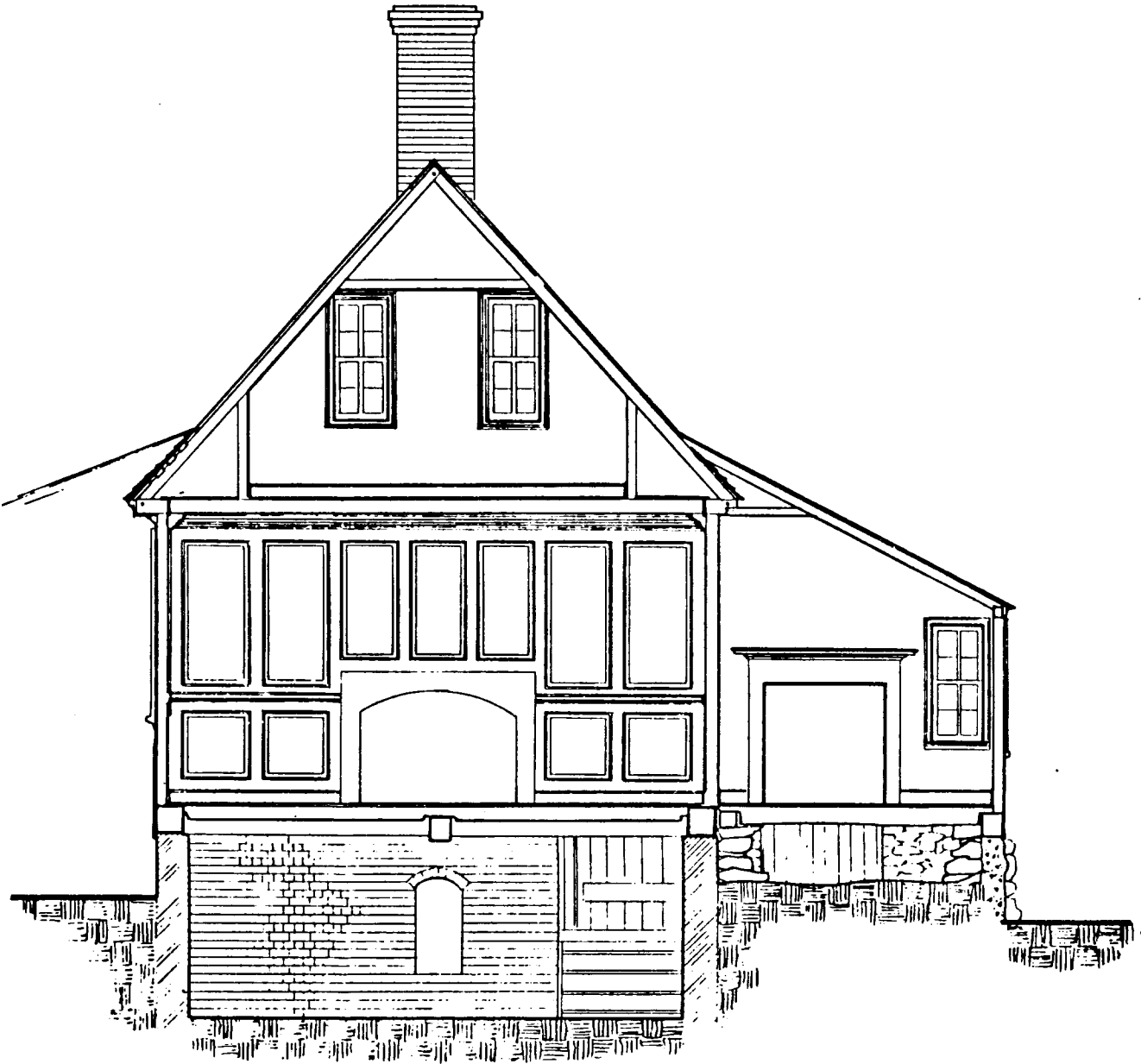


Fig. 4. SECTION "A-A." Original scale:
3/8-in. to 1-ft.

SECTION "A-A"
SCALE 3/8"=1'-0"

ENCLOSURE
1044

WILKINSON ROAD

PRIOR'S CLEVE
AROUND VICTORY

CHARLES COUNTY

MARYLAND

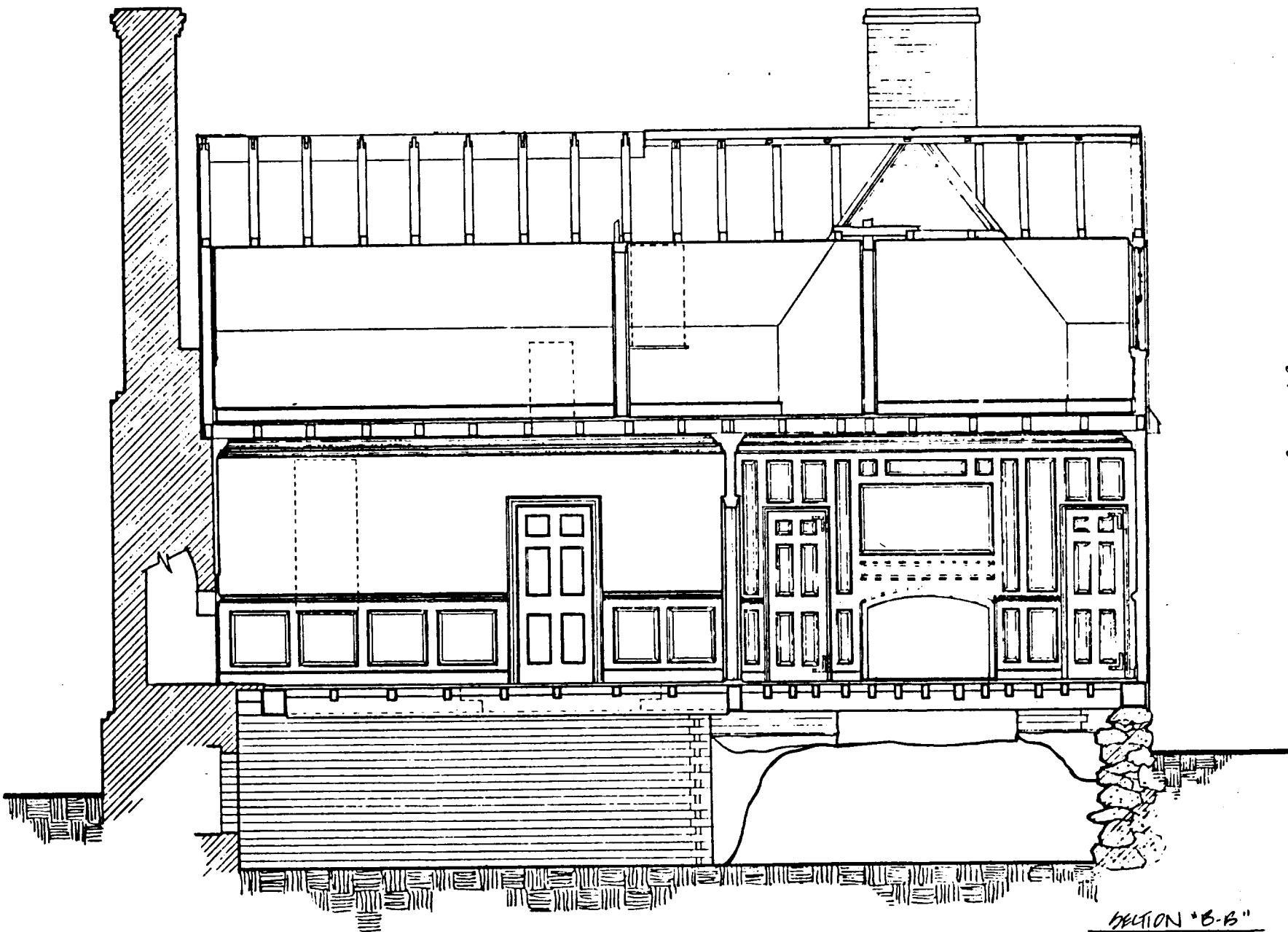
CHAS

SHEET 4

TRE
I

PRIOR'S CREEVE,
Charles County, Maryland.

CH-225



SECTION "B-B"
SCALE: 3/8"=1'-0"

Fig. 5. SECTION "B-B." Original scale:
3/8-in. to 1-ft.

REVISED PLACED

SEWARD AVENUE
2/10/24

WILKINSON ROAD

PRIOR'S CREEVE
ARUNDEL VICINITY

CHARLES COUNTY

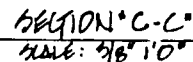
MARYLAND

CHAS

SHEET OF

TYPE
I

CH-225



Revised Schedule

TYPE
I

PRIOR'S CLEAVE,
Charles County, Maryland

CH-225



Fig. 7. SECTION "D-D." Original scale:
3/8-in. to 1-ft.

SECTION "D-D."
SCALE 3/8" = 1'-0"

J. F. KIRK
1964

WILKINSON ROAD

ARVARD VILLAGE

PRIOR'S CLEAVE

CHARLES COUNTY

MAR 1964

CHS

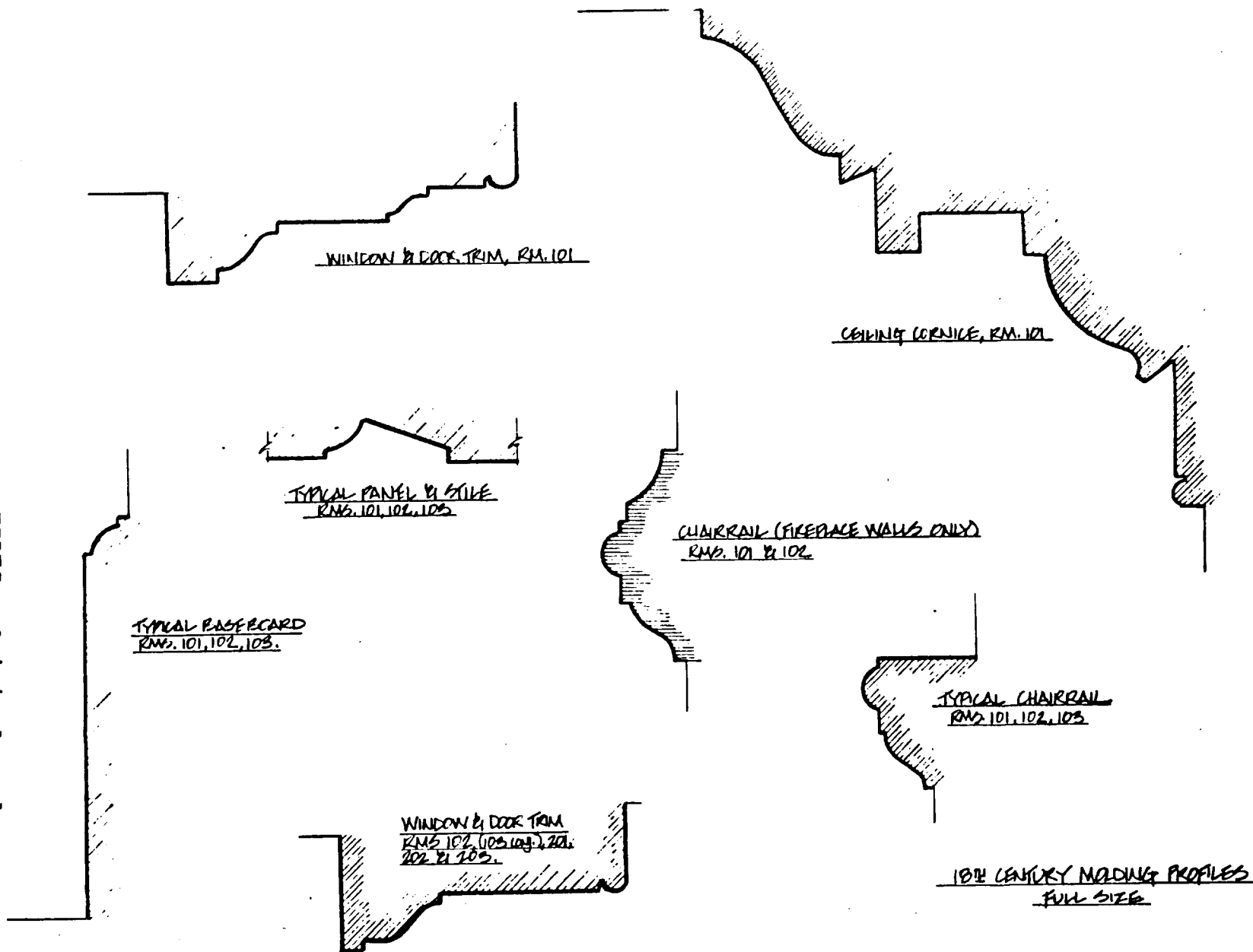
SHEET OF

THE
I

PRIOR'S CREEVE
Charles County, Maryland.

CH-225

Fig. 8. MOLDING PROFILES. Original scale: Full Size.



18TH CENTURY MOLDING PROFILES
FULL SIZE

S. RICHARD RIVER P. 184	WILKINSON ROAD	ARMANDO VICINITY	PRIOR'S CREEVE CHARLES COUNTY	MARYLAND	CH-225	SHEET OF	TYPE I
----------------------------	----------------	------------------	----------------------------------	----------	--------	----------	--------

CH-225

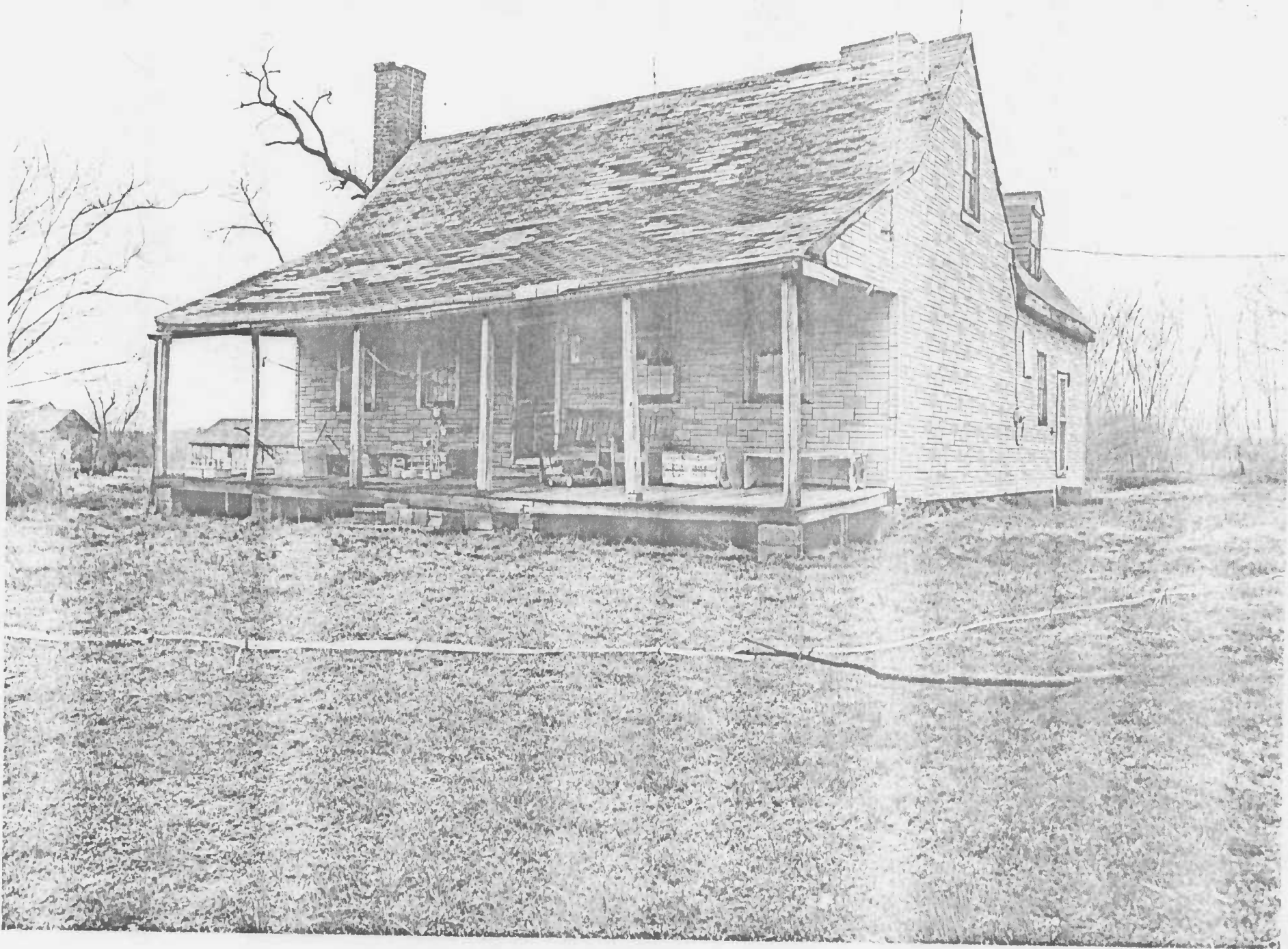
Prior's Cleave

Charles County

Hughesville, Md. quad

location
12 March 1985





CH-225

CH-225





CH-225

CHAS-225
THE HEIGHTS; View From
S.E. J.R.Rivoire, 1978



P.86

CH 225 ~~RSE~~

45%

CH-225 —

CHAS-225
THE HEIGHTS; South End
J.R.Rivoire, 1978